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SUBSTANTIVE QUESTIONS

OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS BY MEMBER STATES ON WAYS AND MEANS OF FURTHERING THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURES AND CAPABILITIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Report of the Secretary-General

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INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 5 of resolution 46/73 B, the General Assembly invited "Member States to submit to the Secretary-General, by 1 February 1992, observations and suggestions on ways and means of furthering the development of communications infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries, with a view to consolidating recent experience in the field of international cooperation aimed at enabling the developing countries to develop their own information and communication capacities, freely and independently, and requests the Secretary-General to report thereon to the Committee on Information at its fourteenth session".

2. Pursuant to the above request, by a note dated 31 December 1991, the Secretary-General invited the Governments of Member States to submit the replies referred to in paragraph 5 of resolution 46/73 B.

3. In view of the limited response by Member States to this request, the Committee on Information at its fourteenth session repeated the above request, which was later endorsed by the General Assembly in paragraph 17 of resolution 47/73 B of 14 December 1992. Accordingly, the Secretary-General sent to Member States another note on the same issue dated 21 May 1992, requesting them, as recommended by the Committee on Information, to reply by 1 January 1993.

4. At a meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Information held on 11 February 1993, a decision was taken to extend the deadline for submission of replies by Member States to 15 March 1993. Accordingly, on 19 February 1993 the Secretary-General circulated another note on this question, extending the deadline.

5. The present report reproduces the replies that were received as of 7 April 1993.

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM MEMBER STATES

AUSTRALIA

[Original: English]

[1 April 1993]

1. Australia supports efforts to further the development of communications infrastructures and capabilities in developing countries. Australia recognizes that an efficient and effective modern telecommunications system is now essential to the economic and social development of every country. Australia notes that the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is both the United Nations specialized agency for telecommunications and the executive agency of the United Nations Development Programme. Australia will be working through the ITU's Telecommunications Development Bureau to support United Nations efforts in the Asia and Pacific region.

2. We support the decentralization of those ITU activities to regions where it leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness. Australia supports the coordination of activities between the ITU's Development Sector and existing Asia Pacific regional bodies dealing with telecommunications, for example, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Asia Pacific Telecommunity.

AUSTRIA

[Original: English]

[29 January 1992]

Austria regards the development of communications infrastructures and capabilities as an essential element of comprehensive development strategies. It will have increasing political, economic, social and cultural importance, especially if accompanied by the emergence of a free communication function of the media. Austria has supported several programmes in this regard in the past. Multilateral projects carried out within the framework of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) deserve particular mention and a positive assessment by donor countries.

BRAZIL

[Original: English]

[16 July 1992]

1. With a view to developing indigenous technological capability, Brazil has long been undertaking international cooperation projects with the support of UNDP and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in the field of telecommunications. Through these projects, that were initially set out in 1974, the State-owned company in charge of telecommunications, Empresa Brasileira de Telecomunicaçoes (TELEBRAS), was able to consolidate the Centre for Research and Development of TELEBRAS (CPqD) as a highly reputed technological centre. At its present stage, CPqD devotes its main attention to the field of components development and telecommunications systems, being able to provide the Brazilian and external markets with technologies that are internationally competitive.

2. Currently, a new cooperation project with UNDP for the period 1992-1995 is under negotiation. TELEBRAS plans to inaugurate a new phase where the focus not only will encompass the field of research and development but will also favour the increasing of the overall efficiency of the Brazilian telecommunications system via, inter alia, new management techniques, quality control and cost-effectiveness programmes.

3. This new project also allocates resources for horizontal cooperation with developing countries to be implemented through the recently inaugurated Regional Centre for Telecommunication Capacitation and Technology that relies upon the infrastructure provided by the centres of Brasilia (National Centre for

Training), Campinas (CPqD) and Recife (Regional Centre for Training). The cooperation policy of the Brazilian Government in this field is aimed at fostering technological capability and promoting technological exchanges with Latin American and Caribbean countries and Portuguese-speaking African countries, as recently announced at the Regional Conference for the Development of Telecommunications, held in Mexico, last April.

4. The Brazilian experience in the field of communications illustrates the usefulness of international cooperation aimed at developing communications infrastructures and capabilities of developing countries. After an initial stage where long-term multilateral cooperation projects assisted the fostering of basic capabilities on telecommunications, Brazil was able to develop indigenous technologies that meet national and international requirements and standards. At present, a new step is under way with a view to enhancing the current Brazilian infrastructure in the field of fast-evolving technologies and to promoting international cooperation with other developing countries.

5. Although limited in scope, these cooperation initiatives illustrate the potential of international cooperation and indicate some of the issues to be addressed by the United Nations agencies and other multilateral organizations involved in international cooperation. In particular, the question of availability of funds for international cooperation deserves careful attention. Another point to be tackled consists of the coordination among various cooperation activities in order to avoid overlapping and duplication of efforts. In this sense, a system for information exchange of ongoing and planned projects would enable developing countries to gather enough data to guide future cooperation activities.

CANADA

[Original: English]

[19 March 1993]

As a contribution to this subject, Canada made available the following report, prepared by the Communications Sector of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

Development of a profitable rural telecommunications infrastructure - Bolivia case study

Abstract

1. This paper illustrates, from CIDA's experience of funding three network expansions in Bolivia, that rural telecommunications services need not operate at a financial loss, nor lack adequate technical support. When planned and managed correctly, and supported by sound tariff and administrative structures, the services can generate sufficient revenue to enable the telecommunications administration to offer a viable service and to sustain ongoing expansions on a commercial basis.

2. The paper describes the Bolivian experience, the funding mechanism used, the socio-economic role, and the financial and technical performance of the systems.

Introduction

3. Canada has provided balance-of-payments support to enable the purchase of telecommunications systems by a number of countries, including Bolivia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe. CIDA's support is provided under a line of contribution mechanism, by which Canadian dollar grants are provided for the purchase of Canadian equipment.

4. Many of the Canadian purchases funded in this way have involved rural telecommunications systems. These include "point to multi-point" multi-access subscriber radio systems (for example, SR Telecom's SR-100 and SR-500 systems) and rural switching systems (for example, Mitel's GX-5000 digital exchange). In most cases the projects have proven successful, and have provided much needed telephone service to previously unserved areas.

5. Three subscriber radio systems supplied to Bolivia in this way serve rural communities in the vicinity of the following centres:

(a) La Paz: An SR-500 system serving a total of approximately 220 subscriber lines, including 44 public call offices (PCOs), in 35 rural localities with a total population of 160,000;

(b) Cochabamba: An SR-500 system serving approximately 160 subscriber lines, including 26 PCOs, in 26 new localities with a total population of 130,000;

(c) Tarija: An SR-100 system serving 40 subscriber lines, including 16 PCOs, in 15 new localities with a total population of 26,000.

In the first two cases, GX-5000 rural exchanges, serving the whole of the respective system coverage areas, were also supplied under the same contract. In the third case, an existing switch was utilized.

6. A previous paper prepared for CIDA* demonstrated, on the basis of experience elsewhere in the developing world, that sufficient per subscriber revenues could be generated on this type of network expansion to return a profit to the telecommunications administration. Evidence from these three systems in Bolivia supports the same principle.

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* Making Rural Telecommunications Profitable, CIDA, 1992.

Planning criteria

7. CIDA's line of contribution is essentially a balance-of-payments support mechanism that is associated with a structural adjustment programme, and is negotiated on a government-to-government basis. The arrangement requires corporate recipients - in this case the Bolivian PTT administration Entel - to purchase the goods at full market value in local currency, by paying the equivalent value into a locally administered counterpart fund. Monies deposited in this counterpart fund are used exclusively for social development programme within Bolivia.

8. As Entel (Bolivia) is purchasing the goods at full market value, investment decisions must therefore be made on a sound financial basis. Issues of commercial viability and cross-subsidization, which properly consider both financial and policy objectives, are decided within the recipient's own regulatory framework and are not distorted by soft financial conditions.

9. The Bolivian expansions were planned using a selection process which combined strategic, economic and market factors, as follows:

(a) The communities served were those possessing a combination of relative size and economic importance. At this stage in the programme, all localities served have at least 1,000 inhabitants (usually several thousand) and/or are administrative or business centres;

(b) The number of subscriber lines per community maximized the revenue-generating capacity and economic benefit per line. Business, institutional and public call telephones were given priority.

10. Entel purposely avoided addressing the full potential demand for residential lines. These typically yield much lower revenues - below the cost of provision - and would have considerably reduced the programme's overall financial viability. It was considered sufficient, at this stage, to provide residential service only to institutional or business managers who have an "after-hours" operational requirement for the service. All other residential customers were provided with telephone access via public call telephones.

Cost of the systems

11. The total foreign-exchange investment to bring service to 420 subscribers in the three areas was approximately US$ 3.9 million. The average cost per line (including local switching cost and, in most cases, solar power equipment) for the three systems was US$ 9,200, ranging from a low of US$ 7,500 for Cochabamba (where the SR-500 radio system required only a relatively small number of mountain-top repeaters) to more than US$ 13,500 in El Tarija (the smallest network, in difficult mountainous terrain requiring several repeaters).

12. Including the costs of local installation, cable plant and the complementary expansion of Entel's transmission and trunk switching network to accommodate the additional traffic, the final average investment cost is estimated at US$ 11,000 per subscriber.

13. The monthly revenues required (on a per subscriber line basis) to break even this level of investment average US$ 190, assuming:

(a) equipment life: 10 years;

(b) discount rate: 10 per cent;

(c) annual O&M cost: 5 per cent of capital cost.

The break-even revenues range from US$ 155 in the Cochabamba network to US$ 271 in the Tarija network.

Tariff structure and revenues

14. Entel established each of the three subscriber radio systems as a local dialling area. The call tariff structure provides adequate financial returns, but it is not excessive by international standards. As an example, the Cochabamba system (Area Code 0411) has the following call charges:

Call destination	Charge (in local currency)	Equiv. US$
Within area 0411	0.61	0.18
La Paz	1.54	0.88
Santa Cruz	1.66	0.48
United States of America	3.64	2.21

15. In all three systems, the calling rate and revenues have grown rapidly over the first year of operation, on average by 6 per cent per month. Each line is currently averaging between 6 and 10 calls per day, the majority to destinations outside of the local area. Revenues have grown to around US$ 350 per subscriber per month, or US$ 4,000 per year.

16. The important feature of Entel's tariff structure, which makes it supportive of self-sustaining rural telecommunications investment, is that national call revenues are charged at a sufficiently high rate to reflect the cost of service provision. In many developing countries, CIDA has noticed a tendency for Government policy to insist on cross-subsidization of the national network, by charging very low domestic tariffs while compensating with high international tariffs. This is not a realistic strategy if an administration wishes to address the problem of increasing its rural penetration.

Financial rate of return

17. Based on a simple discounted cash flow calculation assuming a 10-year equipment life cycle, a generous annual allowance (5 per cent of capital cost) for ongoing operation and maintenance, and just 6 per cent per annum traffic growth after the first year, the internal rate of return (IRR) for the whole programme exceeds 16 per cent. The payback period is approximately four years.

18. If an allowance is made to include all incremental revenues, such as those due to incoming calls originating from elsewhere in Bolivia and from overseas, which would not have been made if the systems were not in place, the rate of return is much higher. For example, if we conservatively assume that incoming revenues are half of outgoing revenues, IRR is over 30 per cent and the payback period just three years.

19. Allowing for the fact that a relatively high percentage of the outgoing traffic (perhaps as high as 10 per cent) is to international destinations and will result in financial outflow from Entel in the form of revenue sharing payments, the net IRR is still in the range of between 25 and 30 per cent.

Economic considerations

20. Entel's supply strategy, although market driven and governed by financial objectives, has also been geared towards maximum economic impact in both the short and longer term. Studies elsewhere have shown that institutional and business customers, besides yielding higher revenues per line, also derive the highest economic benefit when telephone service is made available to them. These benefits are realized as operational efficiency improvements, job creation and contribution to the development of regional markets. Public call telephones, likewise, offer both high revenues and economic return, as well as significant social benefit, provided the telephones and service are maintained in such a way as to guarantee availability. Entel is committed to this and has achieved a high level of service availability in the first year of operation.

21. Whereas the residential demand may not be fully met initially, Entel's strategy has the advantage that it extends high quality first-time service to unserved areas, meets basic community needs at affordable cost, and allows considerable scope for future subscriber growth at lower marginal cost of supply. It is considered beneficial in the long term to have the expansion programme financially self-supporting, so that further expansions and system growth can also be justified commercially.

Conclusions

22. These Bolivian cases have shown very clearly that if planned and managed correctly, rural telecommunications expansion can both meet the development objectives of the Government, and be profitable. Assuming that Government policy allows sufficient autonomy to the telecommunication operating entity to be able to retain sufficient revenues to maintain and expand the network, the rural investment programme can thus play its part in the financial integrity of the organization.

23. A realistic tariff structure is a key ingredient to making such programmes profitable and self-sustaining. In addition, since the key beneficiaries and financial players include Government agencies and institutions, the Government and the telecommunication administration must be committed to ensuring the timely payment of accounts and collection of receivables.

24. Finally, by generating sufficient revenue, telecommunications administrations should be able to commit the trained manpower and other resources necessary for provision of regular maintenance and adequate customer support, to ensure that the system is operated reliably and is available to users. Financial, technical and institutional responsibility go hand in hand to provide, sustain and expand a dependable infrastructure.

25. By removing the foreign exchange constraints from Entel's decision-making process, the line of contribution funding mechanism enabled Entel to acquire the most modern technology for its rural development programme. At the same time, because Entel purchased the goods at full market value, Entel applied sound financial and commercial criteria to the purchase decision. In addition to revenue-generation forecasts over the expected life of the equipment, Entel also considered the cost of maintenance and other criteria necessary to keep the system operational. The sound financial basis of the systems allows sufficient funds to be generated to provide a high quality maintenance, and so ensure a reliable revenue stream.

26. As a result of financial, technical and institutional success in the provision of these rural systems, further expansions are being planned. It is hoped that the momentum will be maintained.

CUBA

[Original: Spanish]

[27 January 1992]

1. The Government of the Republic of Cuba attaches importance to the role played by the United Nations in the establishment of a new world information and communication order which will permit the elimination of current disparities in that field and ensure a more just and balanced flow of information. The Committee on Information has a fundamental role to play in this regard.

2. More appropriate structures must be established to encourage collaboration between the Department of Public Information and the developing countries with a view to strengthening the role of the media in those countries. In that connection, it is important to continue to provide training programmes for radio announcers, journalists and audiovisual technicians in those countries.

3. In the opinion of the Government of the Republic of Cuba, it is essential to continue the work of reinforcing cooperation with the Movement of Non-Aligned States and, in particular, with the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries and the Broadcasting Organizations of the Non-Aligned Countries. In that connection, it is important to strengthen coordination between the UNESCO-sponsored International Programme for the Development of Communications and its development programmes in information, communications and computer science.

4. The establishment of infrastructures and more effective communications capabilities in the developing countries, which will allow them to have their own autonomous media and communications links, is essential to the wider dissemination of their interests and of events in their countries. The hostile

use of broadcasting media against the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of States is incompatible with the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations and must be expressly condemned.

GERMANY

[Original: English]

[18 March 1992]

1. A functioning information infrastructure is one of the basic prerequisites for the modern political, economic, social and cultural development of a country and its society. It is also one of the vital requirements for applied freedom of opinion and information and hence a sine qua non of democracy. Therefore, Germany has always attached great importance to the issues addressed under the agenda item "Questions relating to information" and played an active part in securing consensus on resolution 46/73 B of 11 December 1991.

2. In its practical cooperation with developing countries, Germany considers the promotion of media-related projects to be an important contribution not only to the creation of viable communications technologies in the recipient country, but also to its social and economic development.

3. For these reasons, Germany supports all endeavours, not least within the framework of the United Nations, aimed at improving media standards in developing countries. In the spirit of partnership, it has, therefore, long been helping to build up democratic media structure via multilateral and bilateral channels.

4. For the same reasons, Germany is one of the founding members of the Committee on Information, which was established at the thirty-third session of the General Assembly in 1978. Since 1980, Germany has also been a member of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), making voluntary contributions to its social fund. In addition, Germany provides substantial financial resources to promote various IPDC funds-in-trust projects, with the primary focus on the development of regional and subregional news agencies, particularly in Africa (e.g., West African News Agency Development (WANAD), Central African News Agency Development (CANAD), South East African News Agency Development (SENBAD)). Germany believes this to be the most effective way to help create appropriate capacities and thereby promote the free flow of information in these important regions.

5. In all, Germany's financial commitment to the IPDC's funds-in-trust projects amounts to more than US$ 16 million. Thus, Germany has provided well over half of the total contribution of US$ 25,269,000 received by IPDC by the end of December 1991. At the thirteenth session of the IPDC, held in Paris in February of 1992, Germany once again was the largest donor.

6. In the area of bilateral media assistance, Germany has since 1961 promoted roughly 560 projects, in the amount of approximately DM 1.5 billion. These projects focused initially on hardware supplies for radio in Africa. By now,

the emphasis has shifted to training, in response to the wishes of the recipients. Several German institutions offer basic and advanced professional training courses for media representatives from developing countries not only in Germany but also in selected developing countries.

7. The German organizations concerned, which receive substantial financial resources from the Federal Government for this purpose, concentrate on radio, television and printed media. Involved in these endeavours are in particular the radio training centre of the Deutsche Welle in Cologne, the Television Training Centre of Sender Freies Berlin, and the International Institute for Journalism in Berlin. Thus, approximately 2,000 scholarship holders have since 1965 received training from Deutsche Welle, and 2,508 scholarship recipients from 83 countries have since 1970 been trained by Sender Freies Berlin, while about 1,200 journalists from Africa, Asia and Latin America have since 1963 taken part in courses run by the International Institute for Journalism.

8. In recognition of the great significance attached to a media structure that serves the freedom of information, Germany will continue to devote particular attention and promotional resources to this sphere and thereby contribute to the common goal of an efficient and balanced information structure in all parts of the world.

INDONESIA

[Original: English]

[3 February 1992]

1. Since 1976, Indonesia has achieved remarkable results by uniting its national communication network through the PALAPA Domestic Satellite Communication Systems. Launching its domestic satellite demonstrates the true manifestation of the unity of the Indonesian people. It is pertinent to note therefore that PALAPA's operational capability, distance and time for audio as well as visual communicating is no longer an obstacle. Furthermore, the positive impact of this communication system has resulted in the expansion of the television broadcasting network throughout the archipelago, the development of a long-distance printing system and direct communication between groups of radio listeners, readers and television viewers in villages throughout the archipelago.

2. Among developing countries, Indonesia has made every effort to enhance cooperation bilaterally as well as multilaterally. One form of cooperation was to invite participants from developing countries to train in the field of radio and television management at the Multi Media Training Centre (MMTC) at Yogyakarta, and in the information officer training programme conducted by Indonesia and Malaysia on the one hand, and also between Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam. These exchange programmes have proceeded very well and have been useful for all parties. Indonesia has also been active in the field of information science and technology exchange programmes, education and training, and joint projects between developing countries, especially among States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), neighbouring countries in Asia as well as other non-aligned countries. This cooperation was channelled

to promote the new world information and communication order (NWICO) through organizations such as the ASEAN Committee on Culture and Information; print and interpersonal media, radio, television and film; the convening of the Conference of Ministers of Information of Non-Aligned Countries, the Meetings of ASEAN Ministers of Information, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, NANAP, BONAC, OANA, the Conference of Ministers of Information of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and technical cooperation among developing countries.

3. Indonesia has also welcomed and provided access to foreign journalists to visit and cover the news in the country. For the past six years, approximately 4,000 journalists have visited Indonesia. During 1991, 35 news agencies staffed with 53 personnel operated in Indonesia and approximately 300 film and television crews made various documentaries and current affairs programmes in the country.

4. In the area of technical cooperation among developing countries, Indonesia has carried out education training programmes in the field of communication and information for developing countries which consists of the mass media and interpersonal media.

5. The number of participants from developing countries during the 1979-1990 period were:

(a) The Asian region: 57;

(b) The African region: 34;

(c) The Pacific region: 12.

ITALY

[Original: English]

[9 December 1992]

1. In recent years, Italy has promoted a number of bilateral and multilateral projects to strengthen the communication capacities of the developing countries.

2. Law No. 49/87, which regulates cooperation between Italy and these countries, supports information and communication projects seeking to increase popular participation in democratization and development processes in recipient countries.

3. In the framework of bilateral cooperation, the Italian Development Programme has funded the following initiatives:

- A project of automation of six news agencies in Africa (Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia) sponsored by Inter Press Service (2.9 billion lire between 1988 and 1991).

- A seminar for media agencies of developing countries, sponsored by the Association of Journalists for International Development (120 million lire in 1991).

- A seminar for journalists from Poland, sponsored by the Union of the Italian News Press (80 million lire in 1991).

- The participation of 27 developing countries in the Youth Book Fair of Bologna (Italian contribution: 60 million lire, in 1991).

- Seminars in San José, Costa Rica; Harare, Zimbabwe; and Manila, Philippines, on the role played by mass media in support of the United Nations Population Fund, sponsored by the Italian Association on Population and Development (Italian contribution: 139 million lire, in 1991).

- A project of extension to Tunisia of the Italian television programmes, following a Convention signed between the Italian Broadcasting Company RAI and the Development Department in December 1986. It involved the supply of television equipment (in Sidi Bou Said, Zaghouan, Ksour Essaf and Sfax), the creation of a television studio in Sfax, as well as professional training for the local television staff. The project was completed in the summer of 1990 with a total cost of approximately 28 billion lire. The recipient party was the Radio and Television of Tunisia.

4. Furthermore, the Commission for Cooperation and Development between Italy and Senegal established in March 1991 granted "commodity aid" for the acquisition of technical equipment by the Office de Radiodiffusion et de Télévision du Sénégal (RTS) for a total value of 10.2 billion lire. In addition, there is a pledged grant of 1.8 billion lire for technical assistance and training in the field of television and information.

5. In the same context, the Italian Broadcasting Company, RAI, signed on 13 January 1992 an agreement of cooperation with RTS for an exchange of programmes, realization of co-productions, as well as initiatives of assistance to restructure and improve the radio-television network in Senegal.

6. Within a more comprehensive approach, a three-year agreement (1992-1994) has recently been signed between RAI and the Italian Development Programme, which provides for the possibility of stipulating an agreement with developing countries on the production of new broadcasting programmes and arrangements and dubbing of repertory programmes for radio and television networks of developing countries.

7. Finally, the Italian Development Programme has approved an initiative promoted by non-governmental organizations in association with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), for the establishment in South Africa of a press publishing company, of a centre for radio production, and of a centre for video production. The project implies a total cost of 13.2 billion lire, of which 8.9 billion come from the Italian Development Programme.

8. In addition to bilateral cooperation, Italy has provided financial support to several projects implemented by the major international organizations. Suffice it to mention here the following initiatives:

United Nations Development Programme (TIPS project) "Technological Information Pilot System"

The project is to establish a system of collection and distribution of information on technologies and its marketing in the developing countries. Information flows through a network of computer systems, enabling small and medium-sized companies, as well as the research institutes and professional associations, in developing countries to exchange technical information. Italy has participated in the two initial stages of the project with a financial contribution of US$ 6.75 million for the first stage (1984-1987) and of US$4 million for the second one (1989-1990), as well as with an additional contribution to the "bridging" phase in the amount of US$ 1.2 million for 1988. Currently, the third phase of TIPS is under way; Italy is contributing with US$ 7.5 million divided into three annuities (1991-1993).

United Nations Development Programme project "Economic information to support investments in the third world"

Total Italian participation in the first and second phases of this project (1986-1988) amounts to approximately US$ 4 million. It has generated a network of information on economic and financial data in 15 countries (Asia, Africa and Latin America) with a view to promoting investments in third world countries.

International Fund for Agricultural Development project "Rural development in Latin America"

Italy has participated in the first and second phases of this project (1986-1988) with a total contribution of approximately US$ 1.5 million. The initiative is to promote economic growth in Latin America through the automated dissemination of information on agricultural technologies.

United Nations Population Fund project "Network of information in Latin America and in the Caribbean"

Italy has granted to the first and second stages of this project (1935-1988) a total of approximately US$ 2.3 million. The aim is to establish a system of information on population in Latin America and in the Caribbean; to this end, various courses on information have been organized for journalists of the two geographical groups, in addition to editing of a news bulletin.

9. It is worth recalling the following projects, targeted at specific aspects of the information capacities of developing countries:

United Nations Institute for Training and Research project "Training journalists in international cooperation, multilateral diplomacy and in the promotion of social and economic development"

Generally speaking, its objective was to increase the mass media awareness of international issues; more specifically, it aimed at enabling journalists from developing countries to improve their qualifications by

expanding their knowledge of issues related to social development. Italy has granted the total amount of US$ 1,186,500, divided into three annuities (1989-1991).

United Nations Children's Fund project "Communications strategy for defence of mother and child health and children's rights"

The Italian contribution of 4 billion lire in favour of this UNICEF initiative is in its disbursement phase. Its purpose is to promote the dissemination of information on the fundamental needs of developing countries, through the arrangement of seminars for journalists and instructors, designed to broaden, as much as possible, their knowledge regarding defence of mother and child health. The organization of conferences and meetings aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of mother-child related issues in the developing countries is also planned.

PAKISTAN

[Original: English]

[21 January 1993]

1. The United Nations may evolve a system for development of human resources in the third world countries. In this regard, trainers at the existing institutions may be imparted advanced training and the facilities in these institutions may be upgraded. The training courses for the print and electronic media could be arranged at the national, regional and international levels.

2. Arrangements may be made to share expertise available in Member States.

3. The existing communication set-ups in the third world countries may be offered technical assistance and expertise to increase their capability and improve quality to subsequently bring their standard to the international level. This may be done through the direct assistance of the United Nations and its affiliated agencies by providing technical assistance in the form of aid, equipment and manpower.

4. The reach of the existing communication system may be enhanced to cover more areas and population in the developing countries so that awareness could be created through the inflow of news.

5. The regional training institutions such as ABU and the Asian Institute for Broadcasting Development may be given additional funds to arrange in-country and regional courses in various disciplines for trainers and broadcasters of the member countries.

6. Through its information centres, the United Nations may consider introducing release of funds for such activities for the calendar of activities suggested by Member States.

7. Comprehensive training of journalists is important. A specialized United Nations training institute may be established to impart training to journalists

in the fields of news reporting, feature writing and advanced techniques of mass communication.

8. Creation of multi-purpose centres combining information and development activities.

9. Provision of community centres in places where people live and work.

10. Increasing the number of exchange visits of artists, intellectuals, communicators, teachers, young people and students.

11. Joint projects concerning research and training of information personnel for the improvement of cultural, educational and communication support.

12. Creation and expansion of regional centres for information development.

13. Most urgent local information needs of developing countries should be given priorities.

SENEGAL

[Original: French]

[8 April 1992]

1. In Senegal, where freedom of the press is fully guaranteed, information plays a fundamental role in the consolidation of democracy and in the social and economic development of the country to the extent that it enables the Senegalese people to be properly informed about governmental policies and, when necessary, to contribute to those policies through input of ideas and discussion.

2. However, despite the efforts of the authorities, the major news agencies are faced with serious problems because they lack the necessary resources to implement their important and interesting projects.

3. For that reason, in order to develop and modernize its products and improve the performance of the national daily, the SSPP Le Soleil wishes to acquire, with international cooperation, a modern printing facility equipped with a rotary press.

4. The Société Nationale de Radio Télévision Sénégalaise has launched two projects: RASCOM and the News and Programmes system among African countries.

5. A feature of RASCOM is the establishment of an interim bureau for the pooling of space segment capabilities leased or purchased by African countries. It represents a transitional phase towards the introduction of a satellite system, which will require adequate financing.

6. The News and Programmes exchange system among African countries is designed to improve technical quality, including the means of production, and to increase the transmission circuit capacity with a view to obtaining reliable exchanges of

coordination circuits through the use of telex or fax outside four-wire channel circuits.

7. The main priorities of the Société Nationale des Télécommunications (SONATEL) are:

Communications development

In this connection, efforts are being made to convince the international community that, in the coming decades, the strengthening of the infrastructures and capabilities of the developing countries should be based on the following essential elements:

(a) The development and strengthening of African telecommunications expertise;

(b) Support for the development of community projects.

8. Once established, these two elements will allow countries to take charge of their own development and to devise common strategies to master the technology which, in the long term, is the only way to create the necessary conditions for real independence.

9. Mastery of the necessary technology will promote the establishment of production units and the development of African expertise.

10. The resources being sought are, admittedly, considerable, but, in addition to the efforts of individual countries in that area, the United Nations can exert a positive influence on multilateral resources.

11. In that regard, it is desirable for the fifth and subsequent UNDP programming cycles to be given increased financing in order to realize community projects such as, for example, the ITU AFRITEL project and the subregional maintenance centres.

12. Within a broader framework, the United Nations can help to implement resolution 23 of the 1989 Plenipotentiary Conference in Nice concerning the distribution of receipts from the international telecommunications services without resource to the 50-50 proportional distribution formula. This would promote the mobilization of additional resources earmarked for the improvement of telecommunications networks in the developing countries.

13. In addition, follow-up and financial support for the RASCOM project through a programme of donor awareness would encourage the development of this infrastructure.

TUNISIA

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1. Recently acquired experience in international cooperation is the only way to the real development of the information and communication sectors in developing countries and is a corollary of their political, economic, social and cultural development. There has been unanimous agreement for many years that the contribution of the information media to the social and cultural advancement of peoples is crucial. This is why the emphasis must be placed, above all, on the ways in which developing countries, with assistance from various sources, can acquire the equipment necessary for the development of the mass media.

2. It is impossible to develop a sector which still uses archaic and rudimentary methods. The needs of the developing countries in this area are enormous. The developed countries must meet the expectations of the developing countries because the results will benefit everyone. The equipment widely produced in countries in the North can, however, be transmitted to countries in the South only if the latter obtain the financing needed to acquire it.

3. In addition to making equipment available, greater efforts should be made with regard to the transfer of technology from North to South, in particular, to improve the training of trainers and provide professionals from the South with access to the technological developments of the North. Other areas in which greater efforts should be made are the introduction of new production procedures for newspapers and images, the establishment of new channels and support systems, and the use of computers in various areas of information and communications, including the written press and press documentation.

4. For the countries of the North, the developing countries represent a huge potential information and communications market. Until now, however, urgent needs related to subsistence, health, schooling, and infrastructure projects have prevented the countries of the South from adopting new information and communications technology.

5. It is, therefore, desirable - even necessary - that the first step should be taken by the industrialized countries themselves. This is in the best interests of the entire international community.

6. The United Nations could also play a crucial role in bringing about the implementation of the above proposals. UNESCO, including its subsidiary agencies, the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) and the General Information Programme (GIP), could participate actively in the rapid expansion of the information and communications sectors in the developing countries.

7. Since the twenty-fourth session of the General Conference, UNESCO has undertaken strong action, which has been reflected in various recommendations and resolutions related to Major Programme III, "Communication in the service of man". This action is based on horizontal cooperation among the countries of the South, which, through joint efforts, can achieve encouraging results in areas

such as exchanges of experience, the implementation of joint projects, radio and television co-production, and mutual assistance in the field of news agencies.

8. By helping them, the United Nations and UNESCO will certainly be doing useful work.